

*Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today delivered the following statement on the passing of Levon Helm from the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. A video of the remarks can be found [here](#).*

"I rise today to recognize the life and achievements of my friend Levon Helm who passed away last week surrounded by close friends and family members.

"Levon will be remembered by many as the acclaimed vocalist and drummer for the Levon Helm Sextet, which then became Levon and the Hawks and later what we all now know simply as The Band, which gained international critical acclaim.

"The Band was given its name by Bob Dylan in 1967 while he lived with the band members in a house known as "Big Pink" near where I grew up in West Saugerties. That's where the famed Basement Tapes, which featured Dylan, were recorded. When the album was later released in 1975, it rose to be number 7 on the Billboard 200 list.

"We all remember Levon's unique drumming style and soulful country voice from songs like 'The Weight,' and 'Up on Cripple Creek.' These songs and others have stood the test of time and will be remembered for how they helped shape a generation of rock music and everything that came thereafter.

"Without a doubt, Levon's contributions to American music cannot be overstated. But beyond the music, we cannot forget Levon the man. I knew him well. He was a beacon of our Hudson Valley community.

"He was always willing to open his doors to help raise money for important local causes. He was a tremendous supporter of local agriculture. He worked to bring music into our schools and communities. He was a great person, and a great friend.

"After the release of his Dirt Farmer album, Levon put on free concerts for the community at

Gills farm in Ulster County, New York. Once, he attracted so many fans that State Route 209 was effectively closed down. He would host Midnight Rambles at his barn in Woodstock, inviting some of the world's premier musicians and artists to perform well into the night. Also present was his amazing dog named Bear - everyone loved that dog.

"People traveled from hundreds of miles away to attend. I lived just a few miles down the road, and had the privilege of attending several of those events - and they were really something else.

"Watching Levon perform over the years, you got the sense that despite all the fame, awards and notoriety, at his core he was just a man who felt music deeply in his bones. It's what made him one of the world's great performing artists.

"His passing is a loss for us all, but when I think of the sadness we all feel, I am reminded by some of his lyrics in a recent song entitled 'when I go away.'

"Don't want no sorrow, For this old orphan boy. I don't want no crying, Only tears of joy. I'm gonna see my mother, Gonna see my father. And I'll be bound for glory, In the morning, When I go away. I'll be lifted up to the clouds, On the wings of angels. There's only flesh and bones, In the ground, Where my troubles will stay. All my kin who love me, All my friends who care, Look beyond the dark clouds, We're gonna meet up there. When they lay me in the cold ground, Bow your heads and pray. And I'll be bound for glory, In the morning, When I go away.'

"Levon will forever be remembered in our community, throughout the world and in our hearts. He was our neighbor, and my good friend. I will miss him dearly. Levon has gone home, but his music will live on forever."

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